identify the technological gaps for proper exploitation of the Western off-shore fields etc.

Setting up of Power Grid/Super Thermal Power Station

711. SHRI MAHABIR LAL BISHVAKARMA:
SHRI THOMAS HANSDA:
SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government proposed to set up some new power projects in Bihar like Karnataka with foreign capital investment;

(b) if so, the details thereof:

(c) whether any survey has been conducted to set up a Super Thermal Power Station at Tandva:

(d) if so, the details thereof:

(e) whether the Government also contemplating to set up power grids in tribal areas of the State; and

(f) if so, the time by which these are likely to be set-up ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) The proposal to set up North Karanpura Super Thermal Power project (2x500 MW) at Tandwa in Hazaribagh district of Bihar by National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) was considered. However, the proposal could not be processed for investment approval because of rejection of the site due to its close proximity to reserved and protected forests, objections raised by Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) in having this project in the DVC area, non-resolution of the issue of construction of a dam by Government of Bihar for supply of make-up water to the project, inadequate demand and lack of transmission and distribution system in the region etc.

(e) and (f) At present Powergrid Corporation of India has two 400 KV transmission lines viz., Durgapur-Jamshedpur and Jamshedpur-Rourkela in the Jharkhand area of Bihar. There are also two sub-stations of 400 KV viz one at Jamshedpur and other at Rourkela. No further lines are contemplated for setting up at present.

Below Poverty Line

712. COL. SONA RAM CHOUDHARY: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that about 39.28 percent rural people of Western Rajasthan are living below poverty line;

(b) if so, whether the Government intends to formulate some crash programme especially for rural poors to improve their living conditions:

(c) whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government to declare "Dhanis' and "Hemlets' of desert area as Revenue villages to enable them to reap the benefits of development which is presently restricted to Revenue villages only; and

(d) if not, reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI CHANDRADEO PRASAD VARMA): (a) According to the estimates of NSSO household consumer expenditure survey for 1987-88, the rural poverty ratio for Rajasthan is 26%. No separate estimate has been made for Western Rajasthan.

(b) The main focus of IRDP is giving employment to the target group of people who are below poverty line. All the blocks of the country including Western Rajasthan are covered under IRDP. It is an on-going programme.

(c) and (d) Under programmes of Rural Water Supply and Rural Sanitation, facilities are provided to "Dhanis" and "Hamlets" as per the Annual Action Plan prepared by the State Governments.

In order to enable the inhabitants of "Dhanis" and "Hamlets" of remote areas to benefit under IRDP, it is stated in the guidelines that the priority list of poor families should be prepared by BDOs giving special emphasis to outlying hamlets and nomadic families.

Development of Backward Districts

713. DR. BALIRAM: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have prepared any Programme for the development of backward districts of Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) to (c) Planning and development of an area is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Government. However, Planning Commission provides assistance to the States, including Uttar Pradesh, in overcoming the problems of backwardness through Special Area Programmes in addition to providing weightage for backwardness in the modified Gadgil formula approved by NDC in 1991 for normal Central Assistance for State Government's Plan.

Employment to Flood Affected Persons

714. SHRI RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been conducted on unemployment in the areas affected by Koshi river in Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government propose to formulate any scheme for providing employment to the people of these areas; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI CHANDRADEO PRASAD VARMA) (a) to (c) No, Sir, However, the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) Deptt. of Statistics has conducted various surveys on employment and unemployment throughout the country including Bihar. The last survey conducted on this topic by NSSO was during July, 1993 to June, 1994.

(d) and (e) No special scheme is proposed to be formulated for providing employment to the people of these specific areas. However, various Rural Development Programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programmes, Rural Employment Programmes viz. Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and Employment Assurance Scheme etc. are implemented throughout the country including these areas.

[Translation]

Clearing of Deficits

715. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission has asked the State Governments for taking measures to abolish the deficit in the State Electricity Boards and the State Transport Corporations in their proposals of Ninth Plan and has also suggested to levy additional taxes and cess to mobilise more resources; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. In the context of formulation of Ninth Five Year Plan, Planning Commission has suggested to the States that in order to improve the working of State Level Enterprises, concrete proposals may be framed so that they do not constitute a drain on the budgetary resources of the Governments and may be able to contribute for their respective State's Plans. The Commission has also mentioned that the States should raise their resources by enhancing tax rates containing Non-Plan Revenue Expenditure and improving Non-Tax Revenues.

[English]

Exploration of Oil Wealth By PSU's

716. SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Five Oil PSU's plan foray into Kazakhstan appearing in "Financial Express" dated February 4, 1997;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) the present status of the proposal and implications thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Empowered Committee has approved the proposal of OVL for negotiating the terms and conditions for the project with Kazakhstan authorities, without any commitment at this stage. However, there is no response from Kazakhstan authorities so far on ONGC Videsh Ltd's (OVL) application for exploration licence for 18 blocks covering 20,000 sq. km. OVL has invited OIL, IOC, HPCL and GAIL to participate in the project.

RGDWM

717. SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the name of the States where Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Mission has been launched;

(b) the achievements made under the Programme in those States so far;

(c) whether any other Accelerated Water Scheme has been launched in the rural areas of any of these States during the Eighth Plan;

(d) if so, the achievements made under those programmes in those States so far; State-wise; and

(e) the target date fixed by the Government to ensure the supply of potable drinking water?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI CHANDRADEO PRASAD VARMA): (a) The Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission Programme is being implemented in all the States/UTs.

(b) The State-wise achievements in terms of coverage of rural habitations with safe drinking water facilities are at Statement enclosed.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.